(b) whether the new basic service operators would entice DoT's business customers and thereby affect DoT's surplus now standing at about Rs.4000 crores per annum; and

(c) if so, what is DoT's counter plan to prevent this trend?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) At present it is not envisaged to bring about a change in the original structure and role of the Telecom Commission which is responsible for formulation of the policy of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for approval of the Government and implementation of the Government's policies in all matters concerning telecommunication. An exercise is however, on hand to distance policy making functions from operational functions so that the operating body is fully geared to meet the challenge of competition in the Telecom sector.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) DoT has drawn up ambitious plans for consolidation of network and maintaining high quality of services of international standards. DoT shall continue to provide major share of telephone connections through out the country. A number of new services like Intelligent Network(IN) services, multimedia leading to ISDN services are proposed to be introduced. A number of steps have also been taken which include streamlining the work at Telecom Headquarters for speedy disposal, close monitoring of financial and physical targets, formulation of elaborate strategy for upgrading the skill of employees like setting up and strengthening of the existing training infrastructure with latest technology equipment, evolving appropriate training methodology for training in High-tech field for each group of personnel, deputing personnel for training to institutions in developed countries to acquire knowledge and expertise. Commercial practices are also being reviewed in order to make them more customer friendly.

Development of Ports in Gujarat

*24 SHRIMATI ANANDIBEN JETHABHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government of Gujarat has drawn an ambitious plan to develop ports in the State at a cost of Rs.10,000 crores.

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the central assistance committed or proposed to be given for the development of each such port in that State.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI M. RAJASEKARA MURTHY): (a) and (b) The primary responsibility for the development and management of minor ports vests with the concerned State Governments.

(c) Presently no central assistance is being extended to the State Governments for the development of minor ports.

Helicopters owned by ONGC

*25. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of helicopters owned by Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC); and

(b) the total expenditure during the last three years on each of the helicopters on maintenance and operation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) ONGC owns three helicopters.

(b) The total expenditure incurred on each of the helicopters during the last three years (1992-93 to 1994-95) on maintenance and operation (including A.T.F. and repairs & spares) was